

Tips and Tools for Organizing Resolutions in Defense of the Bill of Rights

This page describes how community members in hundreds of communities around the country planned and implemented a successful resolution effort, and provides links to the documents and tools they used. We invite you to use these steps and documents and adapt them to your needs. For the most up-to-date tools, please see www.bordc.org/Tools.htm.

If you are working on a resolution in your community, please contact us via email at info@bordc.org, or by phone at 413-582-0110

Initial Planning:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Initial Meeting:</p> <p>Invite a group of people in your community that you think might be interested in defending civil liberties for an initial meeting. This can be a small or large group of people, formed as a subcommittee of a larger organization, a new group, or a coalition.</p> <p>Next, create a strategy that will help you accomplish your goals of getting the resolution passed, educating your community, building an activist base, and ultimately working with other people in different cities and towns that have passed resolutions to get the Patriot Act repealed. The most effective tactics we've seen to accomplish these goals consist of building a coalition of diverse groups and elected officials, circulating a petition, hosting a forum/educational event, and lobbying elected officials.</p>	
<p>Networking and Outreach with Other Organizations:</p> <p>After the first meeting, members of the group can agree to call other local organizations and people that might be interested in helping organize locally against the Patriot Act. Members can split up local contacts and let people in other organizations know about the next coalition meeting. It's helpful to get the ACLU involved because they often have mailing lists they're willing to share.</p>	
<p>Community Outreach and Fundraising:</p> <p>Set dates for a forum and next meeting to plan the forum, then send out an invitation letter to individuals, businesses, and nonprofits and to ACLU members in your community. The letter can ask people to endorse the forum and to make a donation to cover expenses such as copying and postage.</p> <p>Benefits of this effort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some endorsers will join the committee; • Endorser list creates a network for distribution of the petition and public forum poster, and for rallying to speak in favor of the resolution at the City Council meeting; • List of endorsers from the community on poster and program will give your effort credibility and show its broad support and appeal. 	<p>Invitation letter (HTML or Word document)</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</p>

Public Forum and Community Education:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Committees:</p> <p>In preparation for the public forum, consider forming subcommittees.</p>	<p>List of possible subcommittees with descriptions of their responsibilities</p>
<p>City Government Contacts, Program Participation:</p> <p>Contact and meet with sympathetic elected officials and Police Chief about your group's concerns and plans. Ask one of the elected officials to sponsor a resolution. Involve these people in your forum. Invite city/town/county councilors and the police chief to participate in the forum as panelists.</p>	<p>Flyer, "Police Opposition to Local Law Enforcement of Immigration Laws (As Allowed by the USAPA)"</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</p>
<p>Other Program Participants:</p> <p>The Program Committee can choose other participants to cover topics of the new laws and their impact on civil liberties, and the impact on immigrants and students.</p>	<p>Poster and Program Sample Topics</p>
<p>Spreading Effort to Nearby Towns:</p> <p>Contact people in surrounding towns about your effort, and invite them to the forum. They might be inspired to organize in their towns.</p>	<p>Local Efforts</p>
<p>Promoting the Forum:</p> <p>To promote the forum, send a press release to media, put up posters, and use your local activist network to spread the word. Send the release and poster to endorsers. You can also create a website.</p>	<p>Press release</p> <p>Links to local groups' websites</p>
<p>Showing Community Support for a Resolution Through Petition Drive:</p> <p>Write a petition, which you may introduce and circulate at the forum.</p>	<p>Printable Petition</p>
<p>Distributing Educational Materials:</p> <p>At tables at the forum, place fact sheets, literature and articles, petitions, buttons for sale (Dissent is Patriotic), and collection cans.</p>	<p>Links</p> <p>Articles about this Movement</p>
<p>Postcard Campaign:</p> <p>As part of your lobbying effort, consider a postcard campaign. At your forum, you can have a table with preprinted postcards to legislators and stamps. Attendees can write their return address on the cards and sign them. If you can, provide the stamps.</p>	<p>Sample 2-sided postcard (Word doc)</p>
<p>Videotaping the Event:</p> <p>Consider videotaping your forum. Your community access station will likely air it. If you decide to videotape the event, be sure to inform participants in advance and note in the program that "This event is being videotaped."</p>	

<p>Continuing to Educate and Gather Support:</p> <p>After the forum, continue petitioning:</p> <p>Table (with literature), put petitions in stores and offices (including those of your endorsers), give committee members and forum attendees petitions to circulate, and placed online petition and printable petition on our web site. The process is useful not only for gaining signatures to demonstrate support for the resolution, but for educating people who are not aware of the USA PATRIOT Act.</p>	<p>Online petitions: English and Spanish</p> <p>Printable petition</p>
--	---

The Resolution:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Draft Resolution:</p> <p>Meet with your resolution sponsor to draft resolution. The Mayor, Police Chief, and other Council members should review the draft in ongoing negotiations to create a document everyone can support.</p>	<p>Resolution</p>
<p>Lobbying Efforts:</p> <p>Make sure each Councilor is contacted by a committee member.</p> <p>Send postcards, emails, and press releases asking community members to call their Councilors and urge them to attend the Council meeting when the resolution will be voted on and to speak in favor of the resolution in the "public comment" period. (Don't overlook high school and college students as speakers!) Make previous arrangements with potential speakers to offer the perspectives of diverse community members.</p>	<p>Sample postcard for lobbying City Councilors; same content was also sent as an email via local listserves.</p> <p>Sample press release prior to meeting.</p> <p>Conservatives opposed to Patriot Act and related legislation</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</p>
<p>Demonstration of Community Support:</p> <p>Gather all the completed petitions. At the Council meeting, deliver the signed petitions. It's effective if you have a significant number of signatures.</p>	<p>Printable petition</p>
<p>PR:</p> <p>After your council's vote, send out a press release to local and national media outlets.</p>	<p>Final press release</p>

Ongoing Outreach:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Press Release and Emails:</p> <p>Continue to spread the word about your resolution effort so that news of your success will spread to surrounding communities.</p>	<p><u>Final press release</u></p>
<p>Follow up on resolution</p> <p>Make sure final resolution document is sent to parties specified and that all the "Therefore"s of petition are implemented, including reporting components, which requires a mechanism in place to receive and disseminate the reported information. You can form statewide coalition by networking with elected leaders and community members of other cities and towns in the state that have passed resolutions. As a coalition, visit all members of state's congressional delegation, and lobby them for what you want.</p>	<p><u>Follow up Checklist (PDF)</u></p> <p><u>Follow up Checklist (MS Word)</u></p>
<p>It's Up to You!</p> <p>The groundwork has been laid, and we encourage people to borrow any documents from this web site that you find helpful. Help us make this web site a clearinghouse of information on Bill of Rights defense efforts nationwide. Contact us about efforts you are working on, or others that you know about.</p>	<p>www.bordc.org</p>